

# BIRD OBSERVER

OF EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS



DECEMBER, 1979  
VOL. 7 NO. 6



PRESIDENT	ROBERT H. STYMEIST
TREASURER	THEODORE H. ATKINSON
EDITOR	PAUL M. ROBERTS
EDITORIAL BOARD	JOSEPH T. LEVERICH WAYNE R. PETERSEN LEIF J. ROBINSON SHEIL ZENDEH
RECORDS	RUTH P. EMERY RICHARD S. HELL ROBERT H. STYMEIST MARK KASPRZYK
GRAPHICS	PAULA R. BUTLER JULIE ROBERTS
PRODUCTION	DOROTHY ARVIDSON LOUISE DEGIACOMO MARTHA REINSTEIN
SUBSCRIPTION MANAGER	HERMAN H. D'ENTREMONT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FINDING BIRDS IN IPSWICH.....James W. Berry 209

THE AMATEUR IN ORNITHOLOGY.....Harold F. Mayfield 215

LONG-TERM BIRD POPULATION STUDIES--  
A REWARDING EXPERIENCE.....William E. Davis 219

TAKE A SECOND LOOK: THE YEAR OF BOSTON HARBOR..... 225

BOOK REVIEW: GUIDE TO THE NATIONAL  
WILDLIFE REFUGES.....Leif J. Robinson 228

SURVIVING AS AN INNER CITY BIRDER IN BOSTON.....J. M. Grugan 229

BIRDERS' CONDUCT: A PROBLEM AT PLUM ISLAND..... 232

INDEX, VOLUME 7..... 234

Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts (USPS 369-850)  
 A bi-monthly publication  
 Volume 7, no. 6 Nov.-Dec. 1979  
 \$6.50 per calendar year, January-December  
 All correspondence should be sent to:  
 Bird Observer  
 462 Trapelo Road  
 Belmont, Massachusetts 02178

Second class postage is paid at Boston, Massachusetts.

All rights reserved.

Subscription to BIRD OBSERVER is based on a calendar year, from January to December, at \$6.50 per year. Back issues to new subscribers are available at \$6.50 per year or \$1.25 per issue.

Advertising space is available on the following schedule: full page, \$40.00; half page, \$20.00; quarter page, \$10.00. Subscribers only may advertise one-of-a-kind birding items free of charge on a space available basis. Such announcements must be limited to 25 words. All advertising copy is subject to approval by the staff.

Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts has been declared a non-profit tax-exempt organization by the Internal Revenue Service. Any gifts to Bird Observer will be greatly appreciated and will be tax deductible to the full extent of the law.

EDITOR'S PAGE

SUBSCRIBE NOW

If you have not yet sent in your 1980 subscription to Bird Observer, please do so today.

In the year ahead, Bird Observer will publish new field identification articles, including ones on Lesser Black-backed Gull and the Philadelphia Vireo. Our "Where to Go" articles will include new sites on the South Shore and the Cape, and a special feature on where to go birding in the White Mountains. We'll even have a special article on birding by night. Illustrations by outstanding local artists will appear frequently. And, of course, we will continue to publish the most comprehensive field records in New England.

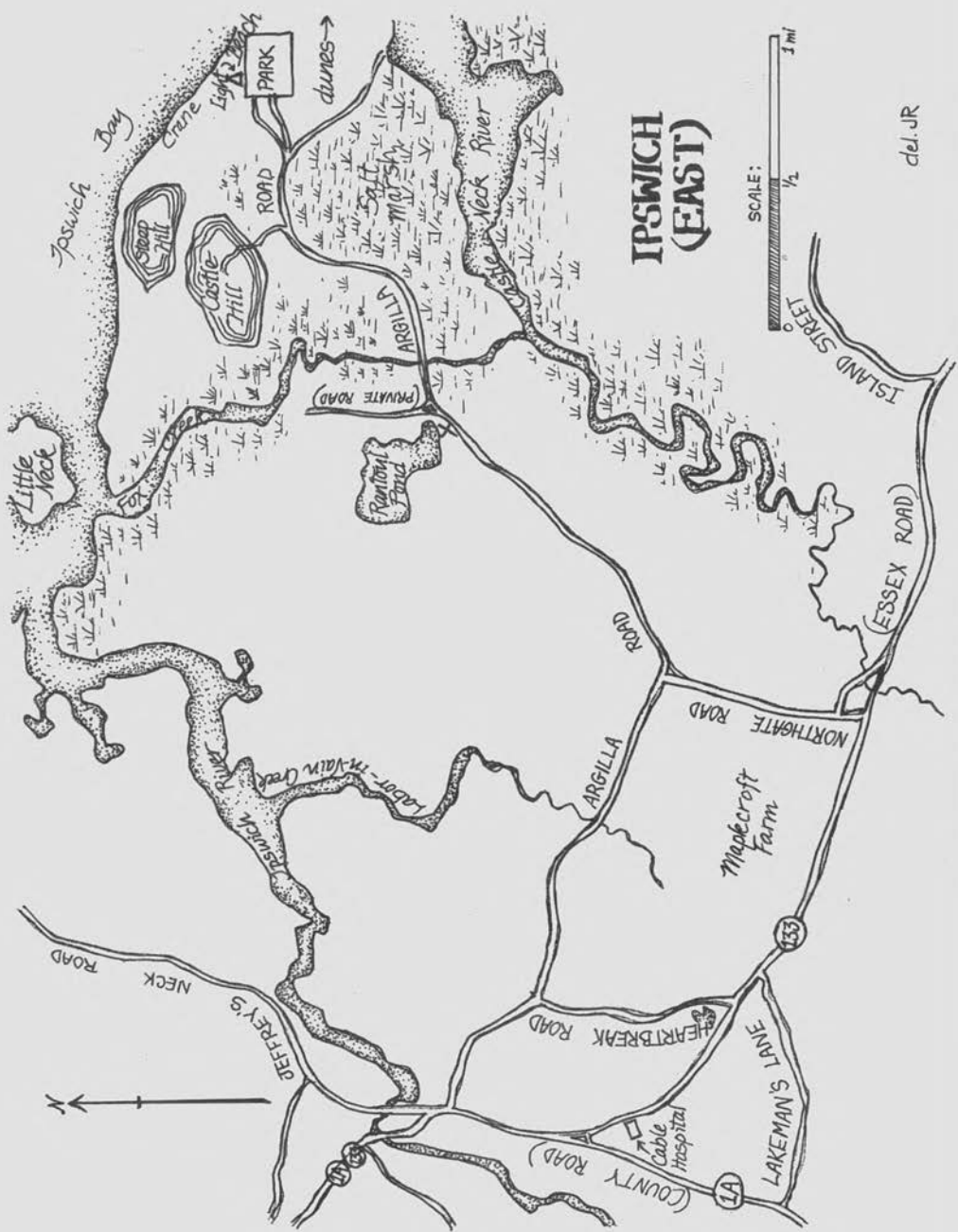
We hope that you have enjoyed Bird Observer, Volume 7. If you did, complete the enclosed renewal form and return it with your check for \$6.50 today. Volume 8, Number 1, will be in the mail on March 1. Renew now and get your copy on time.

ANNUAL CARDINAL, TUFTED TITMOUSE, AND MOCKINGBIRD SURVEY

The 1980 Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, and Mockingbird Survey will take place on February 9 and 10. You can help monitor the expansion of these birds into Massachusetts by reporting their presence at your feeder during the survey period. For information on the census, send a self-addressed stamped business envelope to: Census Card, Massachusetts Audubon Society, Lincoln, MA 01773. You will receive instructions and a census reporting card by return mail.

---

We deeply regret that it has been necessary for George Gavutis, Manager of the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge, to write the letter published on page 232 of this issue. Over the past eighteen months there has been much public discussion of birders' conduct in the pages of publications ranging from the Bird Observer to the New York Times. We have recently heard strong criticism of birders' behavior at Corn Hill, Truro, as well as at Plum Island. Birders are not by nature irresponsible, but sometimes the desire to see a bird better causes a birder to forget to respect public regulations and private property rights. Knowing that most of us have been guilty of this thoughtlessness at one time or another, if you see a birder acting thoughtlessly, gently remind that person to be considerate of the bird sought and the property on which it is sought. This is especially important when pursuing a rarity frequenting a house feeder. Rarities often go unreported because homeowners fear hordes of birders will be trampling across their yards and through their gardens at all times of day. If birders treat public and private property with respect, more people will respect birders and our desire to look for birds.



# IPSWICH (EAST)



del. JR

## BIRDING IN IPSWICH

By James W. Berry, Ipswich

Essex County, Massachusetts, is one of the best birding areas in the eastern United States, and Ipswich is one of the real highlights of the region. It has extensive salt marshes, a small amount of rocky shoreline, and just about every sort of upland habitat short of mountains--farms; orchards; duck ponds; a beautiful river; fresh marshes; wooded swamps; deciduous, coniferous, and mixed forests; and various fallow fields and meadows, not to mention the dump (now closed). Doubtless, it is the variety of habitat, combined with the amount of coverage by birders venturing back and forth between Cape Ann and Plum Island, that makes Ipswich such a birding attraction.

No one article can cover all these habitats, especially since many desirable spots are on private property inaccessible to the public, but I will mention the more popular ones and lay out for the visiting birder an itinerary which can be covered in a day or less, depending on season, weather, and time available.

Crane Beach and Castle Hill. I could not begin this account anywhere else. Ipswich Beach, re-named after the Crane plumbing magnate who acquired the land in 1910 and eventually donated it to the Trustees of Reservations for permanent protection, is, for the naturalist, the undisputed highlight of Ipswich. Crane Beach Reservation is not just a beach, but includes the entire ecosystem of Castle Neck, which is some five miles long and over half a mile wide in some places. This biologically valuable peninsula lies between the mouths of the Ipswich River on the northwest and the Essex River on the southeast. It comprises the beach on the outside, the salt marsh and tidal flats of the Castle Neck River on the inside, and seemingly endless (but thickly vegetated) sand dunes in between.

To reach Crane Beach, take Argilla Road east from Route 133/1A at the South Green to the beach parking lot at the end of the road, a distance of about five miles. From about Memorial Day to Labor Day, be prepared to pay a stiff parking fee, especially on weekends, unless you come after 6 P.M.; the rest of the year the charge is less. (It is no longer free in winter.) For those who prefer to bird on foot rather than by car, the beach and dunes can easily fill up a whole day, and if time permits, it can be well worth while.

Notable breeding birds here are Pine Warblers, which are usually common in the extensive pitch pines not far to the southeast ("down" the beach) from the parking lot; White-eyed Vireos, of which there are usually a few pairs in the thick undergrowth behind the seaside dunes in either direction from the parking lot, but especially to the northwest toward Castle Hill; and, interestingly, Whip-poor-wills. The latter species appears to be getting scarce around Ipswich, but there are still several pairs near the parking lot and in the nearby pitch pines. With patience and a good flashlight, they can be stalked and seen as they call from the edges of the parking lot at twilight.

Breeding water birds are Least and Common Terns, which usually form two or three colonies at various spots behind the high-tide line between the parking lot and the Essex River, and Piping Plovers, which nest in small



numbers either with the terns or at other beach locations where the large crowds of people offer the least interference. Roseate Terns are occasionally seen here, but to my knowledge Arctic Terns have not been seen here for several years. Green Herons nest singly in a few of the thickets in the dunes; I have been lucky enough to find two of their nests so far.

Fall and winter birds of the beach and dunes include Snow Buntings (especially in the parking lot in late fall), Lapland Longspurs, Horned Larks, "Ipswich" Sparrows, Yellow-rumped Warblers in abundance, and occasional Snowy Owls, Short-eared Owls, Merlins, and Marsh Hawks. Various loons, grebes, and ducks are commonly seen off the beach in winter except for those species associated with rocks, of which there are almost none along Crane Beach. The dunes catch their share of migrating land birds in spring and fall, but the area lacks the coverage necessary to determine how good a migrant "trap" Castle Neck is. (It also could use some hawk-watch coverage.) White-tailed Deer are plentiful all over the dunes, and the lone observer will once in a while be rewarded with a close encounter with a Red Fox. Castle Hill, a half-mile walk to the northwest of the parking lot, is good for many land birds as well as for great views of the surrounding landscapes and seascapes. The pine stand on the west side of the hill is a reliable spot for Great Horned Owls. Twice I have seen Yellow-billed Cuckoos on Castle Hill in summer, while Black-billed Cuckoos occasionally nest in the thickets in the sand dunes. The best birds I have recorded at Crane Beach are a Wilson's Plover (on Memorial Day 1974) and a pair of Black Skimmers, which sometimes wander north as far as Plum Island in the summer. Occasionally, Whimbrels can also be seen on the beach, as can numerous other shorebirds at low tide.

Rantoul Pond. On your way to or from Crane Beach you may want to visit this large pond lying between Argilla Road and the marshes of the Ipswich River estuary. It was formed decades ago by damming a small creek and today is excellent for ducks in migration. All through December 1978 it was frequented by a Whistling Swan which was enjoyed by many observers. Mute Swans have nested here for several years, a wild male rejoining a captive female each spring as the pair try to raise their young before the Snapping Turtles eat them all. The pond is very dependable in migration for Ring-necked Ducks and several other species of both diving and puddle ducks. In early fall, Black-crowned Night Herons roost here by the dozen, though several fruitless searches have produced no evidence of nesting.

The pond is on your left as you drive toward Crane Beach and can be approached only from Argilla Road. The property owners at this end of the pond have kindly given permission for birders to view the pond from their land and for the pond to be included in this article. However, parking along the road is difficult; one shouldn't stop if there are more than one or two cars already parked here. Also, the pond is surrounded by several other landowners whose property is posted, so keep to the front end of the pond. Look it over from the grass by the garden and leave quickly so your disturbance will be minimal. This is especially important in the warmer months when there is beach traffic. Visitors can attract other visitors who otherwise wouldn't even notice the pond, let alone the birds. (Fortunately, there is little to look at in the summer months.)

Maplecroft Farm area. The quadrangle bounded by Argilla, Heartbreak, Essex (Rt. 133), and Northgate Roads is primarily pasture land and is one of the best places in Ipswich for Rough-legged and Red-tailed Hawks, the former

in winter and the latter year-round. One March it contained a white-phase Gyrfalcon for a few days. Canada Geese graze in the fields year-round and are occasionally joined by a stray Snow Goose. The fields closest to Rt. 133 at Maplecroft Farm are dependable for Cattle Egrets all summer and, in migration, for Black-bellied and occasionally Golden Plovers, Pectoral Sandpipers, Common Snipe (if it's muddy enough), Killdeer, Horned Larks, and, more rarely, Water Pipits. Yellow-headed Blackbirds have occurred at least twice in this quadrangle in recent years, once in October and once in April. There are places you can pull over on Essex, Northgate, and Argilla Roads--the latter with difficulty--so it is not necessary to enter the pastures, nor is it possible without permission.

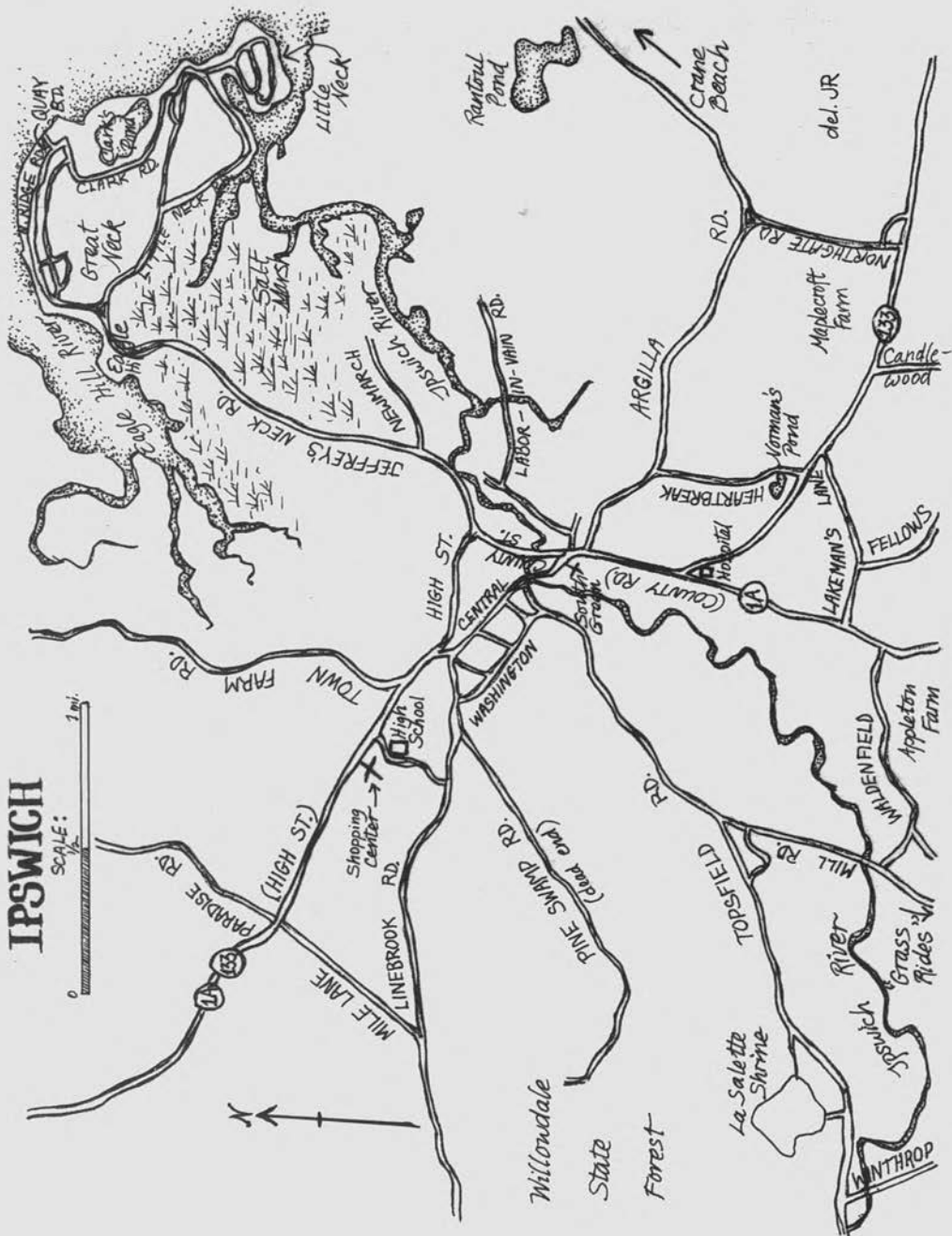
Just to the west of the Heartbreak/Essex Rd. intersection is Norman's Pond, a productive little duck pond during migration. It is accessible from Heartbreak Rd. and from the Norman residence, a brown house on Essex Rd. fronted with evergreens. The owners are always pleased to have birders observe the pond, which can be viewed from either side of the house. Regular visitors are Black Duck, Mallard, American Wigeon, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, Pintail, Wood Duck, and Green-winged Teal; occasional are Hooded Mergansers, various other diving ducks, and once in a while a European Widgeon. Rusty Blackbirds sometimes congregate in the trees here in autumn, and Willow Flycatchers may breed here, as they do in many Ipswich wetlands.

Appleton Farm area. Appleton Farm, about two miles south of the town center on Rt. 1A, is one of the scenic highlights of Ipswich, especially if one rides the B&M commuter train, whose tracks run right through the middle of the farm. Both Cattle Egrets and Glossy Ibis can sometimes be seen from the train, especially in spring. Fortunately, both species can also be seen from Rt. 1A, which is wide enough to permit easy pullover. This is another good place for Rough-legged Hawks in winter and Red-tailed Hawks year-round. Do not attempt to drive through the farm, as it is not open to the public.

Immediately to the south of the main farm, in the town of Hamilton, lies the tract known as the "Appleton Farm Grass Rides." This is an extensive mixed forest, much of it swampy, criss-crossed by wide trails and open to the public, though strictly off-limits to off-road vehicles. This is the best place I know of for Ruffed Grouse, for they are common here and are easily heard drumming in April and May. One morning in 1978 I recorded five grouse, including a close look at one in the act of drumming. Pileated Woodpeckers, Red-shouldered Hawks, and Great Horned Owls also occur here, and I suspect Pine Siskins may breed here some years. The tract is accessible from the north end of Cutler Rd., which goes southeast (left) from Mill Rd. about a half-mile south of the intersection of Mill Rd. and Waddingfield Rd. (see map). There is a small parking area at that intersection (i.e., Cutler Rd.) but parking along this dirt road is very limited and large groups are out of the question. (Large groups are out of the question to look for grouse anyway!) There is a gate where you can enter the forest a few hundred yards down Cutler Rd. Be sure to come at dawn for the best chance of seeing and hearing grouse. From late May on, be prepared to do battle with some of the best-trained mosquito armies to be found anywhere. The swamps that produce them, however, also entice a delightful array of migrating and breeding birds. Another feature of the Grass Rides is its several stands of thick evergreens, which harbor not only grouse, but owls. So far I have found only horned and Screech Owls here, but I have little doubt that Long-eared Owls may be found here, too.

# IPSWICH

SCALE: 1/4" = 1/2 mi.



Miloudale  
State  
Forest

La Sallette  
Shrine

WINTHROP



Jeffrey's Neck. "The Neck" is thickly inhabited at its bulbous end, by birds, as well as by people. Here you will find Ipswich's only rocky shoreline and some of the birds associated with that habitat, as well as extensive salt marshes, tidal flats, and the best duck pond this side of Plum Island. In fact, Clark's Pond is only a few hundred yards from Stage Island Pool at the south end of Plum Island, whose observation tower is easily visible from various parts of the Neck. For this reason, it is not unusual for birds to wander back and forth between the two ponds, which is something to keep in mind when you are in Ipswich but don't have time (or gas) to drive the twelve-plus miles to Newburyport and another ten or so to get down to Stage Island Pool.

To reach the Neck from the south, follow County Street (not County Road) where it splits from 1A/133 at the South Green (see map). From the north, follow High St. The two streets merge and become Jeffrey's Neck Rd, which brings you to Eagle Hill about half-way out on the Neck. On the left, just after the big curve at Eagle Hill, is a good tidal flat for shore-birds, especially at mid-tide. Diving ducks are common here at high tide. Stay on the main road, eschewing all forks to the left, until you come to the isthmus between Great Neck and Little Neck, where you can park and look out over the sound to the south end of Plum Island. From this point, Ipswich River flows in from the right, behind Little Neck. This estuary is like a waterfowl crossroads and virtually any littoral species can be seen here. In addition, the pelagic Parasitic Jaeger comes here in late summer to harass the terns. Jaegers can also be seen from the north end of Crane Beach and from the south end of Plum Island. At low tide it is easy to walk out on the rocks at the base of Little Neck where Ruddy Turnstones and Red Knots are regular, and I have seen a Willet or two here, as well as an occasional Laughing Gull--both in late summer. In winter, this same area has produced Brant, Barrow's Goldeneye, Iceland Gull, and Snowy Owl, and it is an infallible hangout for Common Loons. Almost any sea duck can occur here and views are always excellent because of the relative narrowness of Plum Island Sound. An added attraction in the winter is the regular presence of Harbor Seals on the rocks at the base of the red channel marker at low tide.

From here follow the map to Clark's Pond, which is only about a half-mile away. This man-made pond can be observed from several places as one drives along Clark Rd. Just be sure not to trespass on the developed lots. In summer, Gadwalls nest here, and sometimes bitterns of either species, as well as Virginia and Sora Rails. Purple Martins and Cliff Swallows nest on Great Neck and often feed over the pond. Later in summer hundreds or even thousands of swallows (mostly Tree and Bank) gather on the weeds, wires, and trees, as they do next door on Plum Island. If the summer is dry, the pond's shallow water can be loaded with egrets and herons. Late-summer and fall bonanzas seen here in years past include Black-necked Stilt, Avocet, Sandhill Crane, and a flamingo (1965) afflicted with a severe case of wanderlust. Then, until the pond freezes, it is a haven for Gadwalls, which often number over 100. Hooded Mergansers are also very regular in fall and up to 30 have been recorded. Any puddle duck is likely, and there are always a few Pied-billed Grebes. When Bonaparte's Gulls are on the pond, look carefully for a Black-headed Gull.

To leave the Neck, continue around the north side on North Ridge Rd. until it rejoins Jeffrey's Neck Rd. There are one or two martin houses along the way, and on Quay Rd., a short little dead-end, there is a pier by the

yacht club which offers a perfect spot from which to observe the water-fowl and shorebirds of Plum Island Sound.

Ipswich Shopping Center. This ornithologically famous shopping center, built right over a fresh-water marsh in the true "development" style, ironically provides birdwatchers one of the best places in the state to study the behavior of Virginia and Sora Rails. The parking lot give easy access to the marsh. The reason for the presence of the rails is that no matter how cold it gets, the water running through this marsh from under the shopping center never completely freezes, thus attracting a few rails to spend the entire winter. When there is considerable open water, they can be impossible to find, but if one comes during a prolonged cold spell or after a heavy snowfall, and there is only a narrow stream of open water, you are almost guaranteed seeing Virginia Rails. One January day a few years ago I had six of them along with two Soras. Snipe and Swamp Sparrows also winter here, and every bird in the neighborhood comes here for water, so needless to say, it is a popular place on Christmas counts. I can't be sure that the rails nest here, but Willow Flycatchers do, and Cliff Swallows sometimes nest in the rafters of the canopy right over the shopping center sidewalk, in full view of the shoppers below.

Willowdale State Forest. Had I written this a year ago I would not have included Willowdale, for the simple reason that I had not explored it. This year (1979) I spent a lot of time in this extensive mixed forest because the area had not been adequately covered for the Massachusetts Breeding Atlas Project. I was pleasantly surprised to find several species of Canadian Zone birds breeding here, or at least present throughout the summer and presumed breeding. The most common of these were Black-throated Green and Canada Warblers; less common were Nashville and Blackburnian Warblers, Northern Waterthrushes, White-throated Sparrows and Hermit Thrushes. Other common nesters in this tract are Black-and-white Warblers, Ovenbirds, yellowthroats (even in deep woods), Scarlet Tanagers, and Ruffed Grouse. Broad-winged Hawks also breed, and I hope someday to confirm the Red-shouldered Hawk in this swampy woodland. It is quite similar in habitat to the Grass Rides where they definitely occur. There is also an attractive marsh near the Linebrook Rd. side, the desolate upper end of which held an Olive-sided Flycatcher in late May.

To enter the forest, take either Linebrook Rd. or Topsfield Rd., both of which connect with U.S. 1 two or three miles west of the map. The forest headquarters are on Linebrook Rd. about a mile west of the intersection with Mile Lane. Several trails, all wide enough for state vehicles to drive on, penetrate the forest from this vicinity; parking is no problem, although there are no parking lots as such. Access from Topsfield Rd. is best at the Ipswich-Topsfield town line about a mile west of the LaSalette Shrine, where canoeists often park next to the Ipswich River. A brook flows into the river from the north here. To the left of the brook is an old road one can use to actually drive into the forest. To the right of the brook is a trail that quickly brings you within hearing range of most of the species mentioned above. I have a feeling that more exploration of this forest by birders will show that its potential has barely been tapped.

I would like to thank Gerald Soucy for providing information on some of the sightings mentioned in this article and for acquainting me with some of these locations when I first came to Ipswich in 1972.

## COMMENTARY

### THE AMATEUR IN ORNITHOLOGY

Harold F. Mayfield

No branch of biology has felt the hand of the amateur like ornithology. Other branches have had amateur participation, but always more limited in scope. In botany interest has centered mainly on wildflowers, in entomology on butterflies and moths, and in malocology on shells, while in ornithology the influence has been pervasive.

From ancient times inquiring minds have found birds attractive subjects for study. Beyond all other creatures on earth, birds capture the eye with bright colors, the ear with music, and the imagination with the power of flight. Unlike many mammals and other forms of life, most of them are active in daylight in places where they can be seen and studied easily. For these reasons scholars long ago labeled ornithology the "scientia amabilis." Professional ornithologists usually have been captivated by birds long before they thought of themselves as biologists, and in this respect they differ from many of their colleagues, few of whom, for example, came to science through their love of fruit flies or rats.

Until the first quarter of this century, ornithology was mainly the province of amateurs in America as well as in Europe. Before the invention of prism binoculars near the beginning of the century, most field observation took place down the barrel of a shotgun. Not surprisingly, sport hunters and taxidermists were prominent among those people with more than a casual interest in birds. Physicians calling on patients in horse-and-buggy days, with a gun under the seat and dissecting instruments at hand, were well-situated to collect and preserve specimens. Clergymen and teachers, as the resident scholars in many communities, became also the bird experts. The Wilson Ornithological Society sprang from correspondence among teen-age egg collectors, and even the great professionals like Ridgway and Chapman often had no university training in biology.

In modern times the number of professionals, along with employment opportunities for them, has grown enormously, and the number of amateurs has fully kept pace. The literature has expanded accordingly and has reflected a widening spectrum of interests, from the superficial to the profound, loosely identified with "ornithology." To some professionals this brings a measure of embarrassment, lumping them with company they would prefer to disavow. Fieldwork is fun, and the public is not always able to distinguish what is purely recreational. In some quarters James D. Watson was dismissed lightly as a mere bird watcher before the elucidation of the double helix brought him the Nobel Prize in 1962. In the peck order of human society, indoor workers often look down on outdoor workers, and indeed, from the vantage point of controlled conditions in the laboratory, the outside world is deplorably untidy. Very recently "natural history" seemed headed for oblivion until restored to respectability in the name of ecology.

Although the scientist and the bird watcher may be hard to distinguish

from a distance, the importance of ornithology to biology can no longer be questioned. Birds are the best studied class of vertebrates, and ornithology has led in many of the advances of biology. Observation of birds helped Darwin put the pieces together in arriving at the concept of evolution, and many recent refinements in evolutionary theory have come out of field studies of birds. Widespread recognition of the importance of ornithology came in 1973 when Konrad Lorenz and Niko Tinbergen shared a Nobel Prize for their pioneering role in the new discipline of ethology. It was no accident that the first Recovery Plans submitted under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 dealt with birds. And now a public far beyond the scientific community has become alerted to the significance of birds as indicators of the quality of the human environment. May I suggest that much of the vigor of ornithology has come from the amateur infusion?

The force of the amateur component is expressed in many ways. Most obvious is the financial support to institutions, scientific societies, and their publications. Notable especially in times of crisis is their function in educating the public and the legislatures on such issues as conservation and the teaching of biology.

Although research in this field as in all others is steadily becoming sophisticated, amateurs continue to make major contributions to the advancement of knowledge. The Brewster Memorial Award for the "most important recent work on the birds of the Western Hemisphere" has been conferred 45 times beginning in 1921, and on one-fourth of those occasions it has gone to people not earning a livelihood as biologists. Although the last quarter of a century has brought a vast increase in the number of professionals and consequently a relative decline in the prominence of amateurs, Kenneth C. Parkes has calculated that 12% of the papers in the four leading American ornithological journals in 1975 were written by people not employed in biology (in J. R. King and W. J. Bock 1978, Workshop on a National Plan for Ornithology, Final Report, Panel on the Role of Ornithological Societies and the Amateur, Appendix vi). The size of this amateur element and the eagerness of its members are revealed in answers to a questionnaire addressed to "avian biologists" nationwide. In their responses 48% identified themselves as amateurs, and 90% of these expressed an interest in participating in research (King and Bock op. cit., p. 8).

In research the amateur brings to ornithology additional richness through diversity. Not seeking government grants nor academic status, the amateur is free to tread the byways of inquiry, without pressure for immediate results or conformity to current themes. In ornithology important problems are still accessible to the individual using his own resources. Discoveries are still possible without profound knowledge or elaborate equipment. The very complexity of biology has left unsolved mysteries within reach of any imaginative person. Compare, for example, mathematics, where basic simplicity and clarity has allowed centuries of progress to be piled layer on layer until the structure is so elaborate that mere comprehension of relevant questions is beyond the novice, or atomic physics and astronomy, where the equipment is so far beyond the reach of the individual that even the largest of institutions acquire it only through consortia.

Although solid work is performed by some amateurs on their own, the full

potential of the whole group will not be developed without professional collaboration. This will become more important in the future as increasing specialization and depth threatens to move the frontiers away from the avocational ornithologist. In field observations many amateurs have skill few professionals can match, and their forte is the gathering of data, but the full value of their work will not be realized without professional assistance to see the facts within the larger conceptual framework of biology. Thus, the professional touch is often vital in pinpointing the information needed, planning the studies, and analyzing the results.

Some aspects of ornithology would seem to depend on amateur assistance indefinitely. It is difficult to imagine large-scale investigations of populations, migration, or reproductive success without the help of volunteers. The annual Christmas bird counts of the National Audubon Society have 30,000 people taking part and paying for the privilege. Selected volunteers work nearly 2,000 routes for the Breeding Bird Surveys coordinated by Chandler S. Robbins of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The greatest data bank on avian reproductive success in America is accumulating at the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology mainly through the work of amateurs. These are some of the more conspicuous American examples, but the potential of amateur mobilization has been demonstrated best by the British Trust for Ornithology, whose projects already have included preparation of an atlas of breeding birds, co-ordination of all bird banding in the country, special censuses of farmlands and estuaries, and the accumulation of vast amounts of nesting data.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the amateur, and assuredly one that will not dwindle in the years ahead, is the nurture of young scientists. Nearly every scientific career in ornithology has been strongly influenced by early association with an enthusiastic amateur. Birds catch the imagination of the susceptible child and then the spark is fanned by an adult hobbyist. In each locality amateurs usually lead the bird hikes, prepare the check-lists, organize the bird clubs, and write for the newspapers. Not all of them contribute to the scientific literature but nearly all of them read some of it. A case in point is a small-town biology teacher who proudly counts among her former students five Ph.D.'s in biology, including at least two fellows of the American Ornithologists' Union.

The opportunity represented by amateurs was the subject of discussion in February 1978 when about 30 invited people met at Ithaca, New York, under the auspices of the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. These people were unanimous in believing this was a great and growing resource that had scarcely been tapped for its potential value. Although a few amateurs carry out independent research of professional caliber, everyone agreed that most of this energy and enthusiasm could be harnessed and enhanced only with professional leadership.

A similar view was supported and amplified by the Workshop on a National Plan for Ornithology reporting to the National Science Foundation and the American Ornithologists' Union in March 1978 (King and Bock op. cit.). This group urged that the professional societies become prime



movers in raising the participation of amateurs, local bird clubs, and nature centers. The recommendations pressed for new initiatives, with attention to better communications, training, and cooperative projects. To move in this direction, leaders of the ornithological societies in editing their journals and planning their meetings should give more thought to the breadth of the audience and accordingly direct a proper share of communications to the interested layperson. This calls for selecting a balanced fare and minimizing jargon and obscurity in presentations. All of this will require special effort in the face of forces pushing in the opposite direction.

In ornithology a symbiotic relationship has existed between the amateur and professional. Societies in the field, increasingly dominated by professionals, should recognize in the amateur segment a beneficial force. To preserve a fruitful relationship, they must continue to serve this portion of their constituency also. No other branch of science has this rich resource.

In arguing that ornithology is fortunate never to have drawn a clear line between the amateur and professional, I draw support from the view of science expressed by Jacob Bronowski in "A Sense of the Future" (1977, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, p. 4): "Let no one tell you again that science is only for specialists; it is not. It is no different from history or good talk or reading a novel; some people do it better and some worse; some make a life's work of it; but it is within the reach of everybody."

Reprinted with permission from The Auk, 96, 1 (168-171).

---

#### WHERE TO FIND BIRDS IN EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS

Compiled, revised, and edited by Leif J. Robinson and Robert H. Stymeist. Published by Bird Observer of Eastern Massachusetts, 1978.

If you haven't already purchased a copy of this new site guide, you're missing the action! This anthology of bird-finding articles from the first six years of Bird Observer focuses on 28 birding areas, all described by local experts. In addition, there are special reports on where to see pelagics from land and where to view hawk flights. To get you to all the sites, each article is accompanied by a detailed map.

Read what others say about Where to find Birds in Eastern Massachusetts:

"No wasted words, very little duplication of statement, precise, straightforward and informative ... Get it." Susan Roney Drennan, Associate Editor, American Birds.

"The book fills a long-felt need and is indispensable for local birders, both experts and beginners." Ray Murphy, Boston Sunday Globe.

Get your copy now! Use the handy order blank in this issue.

## LONG-TERM BIRD POPULATION STUDIES--A REWARDING EXPERIENCE

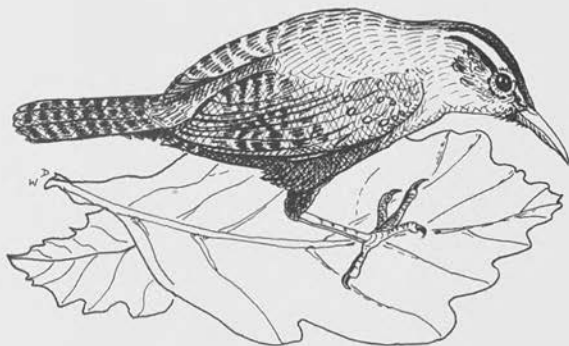
by William E. Davis., Jr., Foxboro

Several years ago, when I decided to expand my interest in birds, participation in the Breeding Bird Census and Winter Bird-Population Study (both sponsored by American Birds) seemed a likely first step. I have just completed my third year of involvement, and this article describes aspects of these studies that I have found interesting and provocative.

For the Breeding Bird Census I attempt to locate every nesting pair of birds in an approximately 30-acre area in the town conservation land near my home in Foxboro. At the same site the Winter Bird-Population Study requires a periodic sampling of winter birds. My area is primarily a maple, pine, and oak second-growth forest, quite swampy in places, which is typical of many parts of the northeast that have been preserved from development because of their perennial wetness.

The purpose of both types of surveys is to provide long-term baseline data on breeding and wintering bird populations in a wide variety of habitats in North America and to provide data for the analysis of any changes in these populations that may occur. Data has been published by the National Audubon Society for some 32 years for the winter study and 43 years for the breeding bird study.

Long-term censuses provide an opportunity to monitor fluctuations in nesting or winter feeding populations, and in my case to correlate any changes with several environmental factors. For example, for a number of years up to the spring of 1976, the Norfolk County Mosquito Control Project had sprayed my area by helicopter with the larvicide Baytex (fenthion); they sprayed nothing in the spring of 1977; and then resumed spraying in the spring of 1978 with the considerably less toxic compound ABATE. It will be interesting to look for any correlations between nesting bird populations and the application of these pesticides. Similarly, the study area has been infested for the past several years with a defoliating density of Gypsy Moths, and nesting Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos feed heavily on them. Last year the moths showed definite signs of a population crash; if this downward trend continues, it will be interesting to see if any changes occur in the nesting cuckoo population.



Over the years I can also follow the population vagaries of each of the species that nest in the census area (see Table I). An increase in one species nesting population that correlates with a decline in another may offer insight into competition for food or nesting sites, or differential resistance to other environmental factors such as pesticides. It is too early in the study to consider any trends significant, but my general impression of the breeding bird population is one of stability--in marked contrast to the winter bird population, which seems to fluctuate widely in species composition and numbers, reflecting in part the influence of irruptive species such as the winter finches.

The Winter Bird-Population Study, perhaps surprisingly, has been the more exciting and more interesting of the two projects. Part of this stems from occasional exciting events, some of which are described later, but more importantly because the study has raised additional questions and problems. The number of birds encountered on the winter sampling trips (averaging about 100 minutes each over the same route from early December through February) has varied widely, from a maximum of 27 to zero. Of the 40 trips taken over the past three winters, five or fewer birds were recorded on 17 trips and more than 20 in six. Preliminary graphs plotting bird sightings per hour against inches of snow cover, clear or cloudy sky, calm or windy conditions, and temperature indicate that the number of birds encountered is probably not significantly related to any of these variables alone. (In the future, more sophisticated statistical techniques will be employed.)

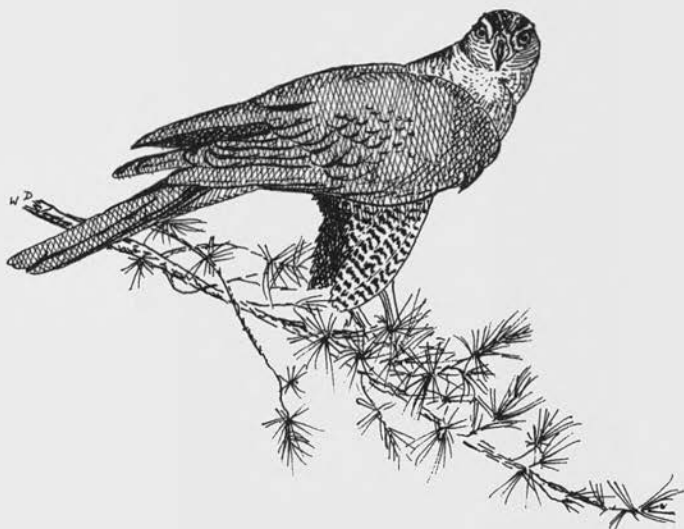
TABLE I

Breeding Bird Census Data

	1976	1977	1978
Total Breeding Pairs	55	60	44
Number of Breeding Species	29	28	26

This suggests that random factors, such as chance encounters with a mixed foraging flock, may strongly influence both the numbers of birds and species encountered. On 16 sampling trips in the winter of 1977-78, nine of the 18 species were recorded only once. This may again indicate the importance of chance encounters in assessing species diversity when birds are widely scattered and low in numbers. Nonetheless, it may be possible to pick out the "bad" and "good" winters on the basis of these sampling techniques. For example, the number of sightings per hour dropped from 7.7 in 1977-78 to 4.3 in 1978-79, and the latter winter was generally regarded as a "bad" one for birds. Any statistical evaluation of these figures awaits further data.

The banding of winter feeder birds will give me an opportunity this spring to test the supposition that the birds that winter in your yard are generally not the same ones that nest there. It is generally believed that even reasonably sedentary birds, such as chickadees, migrate short distances at least.



Another problem associated with the winter bird study concerns the impact of bird feeders in the immediate vicinity of the area. There are at least five active feeding stations (one of which is at my home) within 200 yards of the study area, and their proximity raises a number of questions. How large a bird population is supported in winter by the feeders? Are the mixed foraging flocks encountered in the deep woods part of this feeder-supported population or are they entirely separate populations? Or, do the birds procure their food both by foraging and from feeders? If the latter is the case, what effect do the feeders have on the number of birds found foraging in the woods? If there were no feeders available, would the winter bird population in the woods be larger, smaller, or remain the same?

In order to answer some of these questions, I have, over the past two winters, attempted in several ways to determine the size and structure of the feeder population, I have recorded the number of species and individuals at the five feeding stations at the end of each trip through the study area. Secondly, I have recorded the largest total number of individuals of each species that I have seen at any one time during the winter at any of the stations.

The first method, for the winter of 1977-78, produced an average count of 60 birds at feeders after each census trip; this year I saw an average of 40. These figures are undoubtedly low estimates because most birds do not stay at the feeders all the time. The total of the largest counts for each species yielded 229 birds for the winter of 1977-78 and 179 for 1978-79.

To determine if feeder-frequenting birds also forage in the woods, as well as to try more accurately to estimate the feeder population, John Kricher and I began banding birds at my feeder this winter. Of 192 birds banded (15 species) 44 were subsequently recaptured. The recapture per-

centages varied markedly among species, reflecting probably greater stability in the feeder population of some. The Black-capped Chickadees, with a 50 percent recapture rate, were the real "stay-at-homes." Though the numbers of each species banded and retrapped are too small to warrant statistical examination at this time, my general impression is that feeder populations are less static and involve many more birds than I first thought. Of the 39 birds seen well enough on sampling trips to determine positively if they wore bands, three were banded. Since I had never before seen a banded bird in my area, the three birds were in all probability ones which I had banded. Thus, it appears that the feeder and deep woods populations are not totally distinct. Expanding the banding effort in future years to include other feeders in the area and better trapping methods will, I hope, provide some insight into many of the questions that are yet unanswered.

Occasionally an opportunity arises to document a dramatic population change. During the 1976-77 winter I recorded Golden-crowned Kinglets on the first six sampling trips through January 12th. On the seventh run, January 14th, no kinglets were observed, nor on the additional three runs that winter. In fact, I have not encountered a kinglet on the subsequent 30 runs during the last two winters. It seems probable that the widespread Golden-crowned Kinglet crash of that winter also occurred in my area near the middle of January.

Involvement in these projects has, of course, cost me a few mornings at Mount Auburn or Plum Island, but it certainly has not been devoid of excellent birding experiences. In fact, I have been pleasantly surprised by the number of "good" birds that crop up during the multiple trips to a very ordinary block of swampy woodland. I have recorded a





total of 80 species in the woods on the census runs, not including birds flying over. Among the "good" birds were such gems as Golden-winged and Mourning (male) Warblers, and a Carolina Wren which perched and sang within twenty feet of me. On one winter sampling trip two Goshawks responded to my "psh-psh-psh" call by flying from a nearby stand of White Pine toward me, the adult bird flying directly over my head at tree-top level, and the immature bird alighting in a tree not 20 feet away from me. On another winter run (February 12th) I watched an adult Northern Shrike for some time from a distance of about 50 feet and was treated to 12 minutes of almost uninterrupted song, catbird-like nasal squawks interspersed with weeps and warbles, reminding me of a mockingbird or thrasher. It terminated its song by regurgitating a pellet which proved to be mostly small bird bones and feathers.

The breeding bird census trips have also produced a wide variety of other experiences. There is something very special about discovering the four blue eggs in a Veery nest next to a pine bough on the ground or a bright blue egg and two tiny grey and white Black-billed Cuckoos with their eyes still closed. More impressive still was the frantic distraction display of the female Black-and-White Warbler, both wings flapping wildly as she led me away from her leaf-capped nest with three young. A similar display by a Nashville Warbler succeeded; I never found the nest. On another occasion I saw the entire mating ritual of a pair of Black-billed Cuckoos. Some of the interactions among different species were not so pleasant to watch. On three occasions, over an 11 day period, I saw a pair of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers engage Blue Jays; they never succeeded in raising a brood.

One of the enchanting qualities of these studies arises from the fact that they provide a constant opportunity to be alone while studying the ecology of birds. I thoroughly enjoy a day of bird watching with friends, but there is something special about a quiet interaction with nature alone. With the ominous threat of gasoline rationing looming on the horizon, local birding projects like these will provide worthwhile alternative birding opportunities.

Patricia Ledlie - bookseller Box 46 Buckfield, Maine 04220  
(207) 336-2969

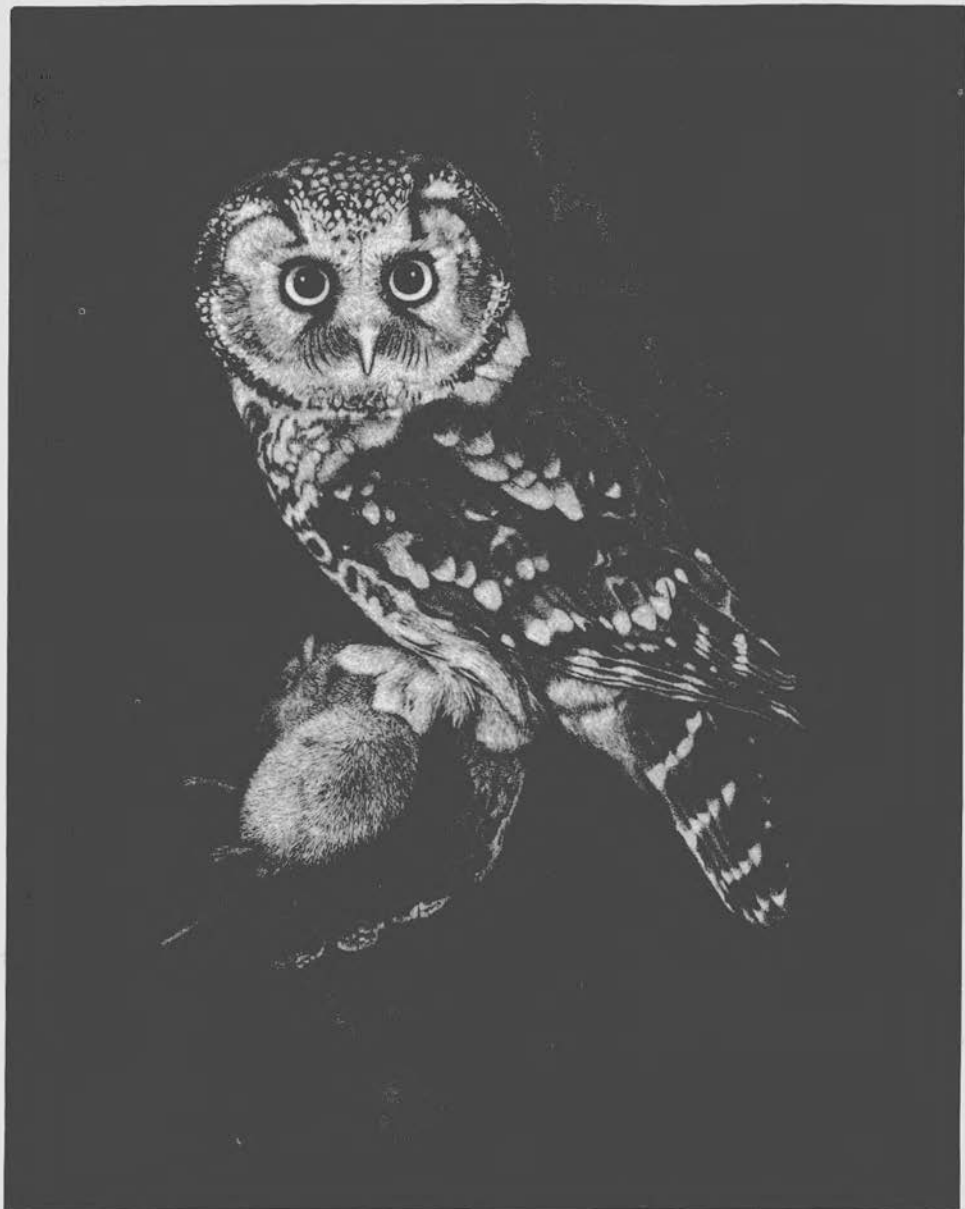


Out of Print, Rare

# Bird Books

Annotated Catalogues: \$1.00

By Appointment



On December 31, 1978, Fred Atwood discovered a Boreal Owl in Salisbury, the first recorded sighting in the state since December 20, 1942. Drawn in the scratchboard technique by Alison Webber, this representation of a Boreal Owl will invoke fond memories for some birders, and bittersweet ones for others.

## TAKE A SECOND LOOK: THE YEAR OF BOSTON HARBOR

Two million people live less than twenty miles from one of the ornithologically richest and most varied areas in Massachusetts: Boston Harbor.

Only a few bird-watchers seem to appreciate this vast wild area next to a major metropolitan area. This rich birding resource, accessible by public as well as private transportation, is underutilized if not ignored by most bird-watchers.

Consequently, Take a Second Look will focus on Boston Harbor during 1980. In a series of field trips and seminars spanning the four seasons, Take a Second Look intends to involve bird-watchers at all levels of proficiency in a study of the populations and behavior of Boston Harbor's water birds. This should be an exciting learning experience for everyone as each becomes more familiar with the diverse birdlife of Boston Harbor and with the harbor itself.

Take a Second Look's first Boston Harbor field trip, on March 25, 1979, revealed what a single such field trip can accomplish. Six birders were introduced to the wealth of harbor birdlife for the first time. Observers discovered five Barrow's Goldeneyes, a Harlequin Duck, a King Eider, a Glaucous Gull, and a Black-headed Gull. Over 12,000 Common Eider were seen. Red-necked Grebes in breeding plumage were seen in spectacular courtship displays; Gannets were observed harassing gulls and Buffleheads. Most important of all, accurate counts of all species of water birds in Boston Harbor were obtained using a multiple-party counting technique. Other than Christmas Counts, this was the first such census of Boston Harbor ever attempted.

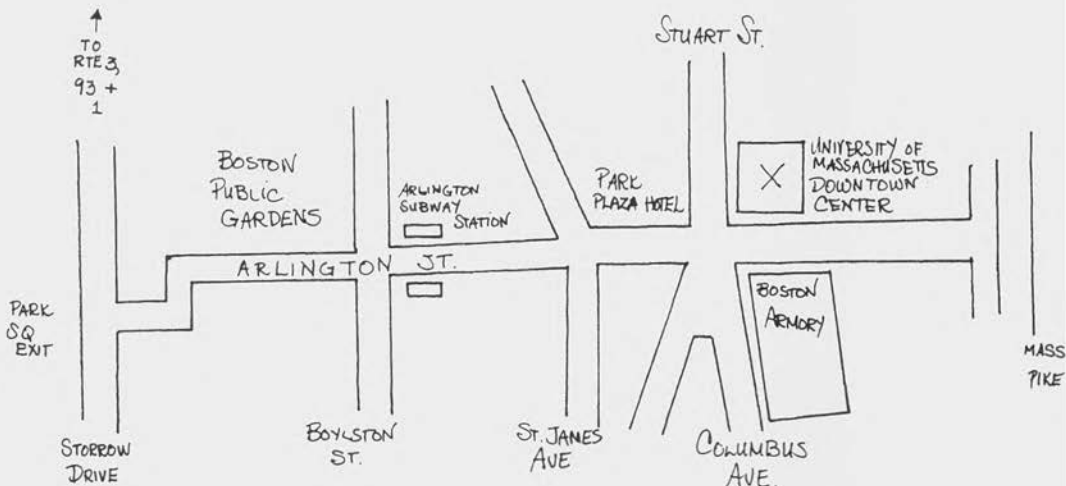
By conducting six surveys of the water birds of the harbor during 1980, TASL hopes to develop a body of data that can be used to aid efforts to preserve and enhance the harbor habitats. Each survey, which will be followed by a group tally and discussion of the day's observations, will enable people to become more familiar with the bird population of the harbor throughout the year.



Here is your schedule of TASL Boston Harbor field trips for 1980. Field trips and workshops pertaining to other aspects of bird-watching will be announced later in the year.

February 3, 7:00 p.m.:

Orientation meeting at the auditorium of the University of Massachusetts Downtown Center, 250 Stuart Street, Boston. A slide show on the water birds of Boston Harbor will be presented and the results of the Greater Boston and Quincy Christmas Counts, as they related to the Harbor, will be discussed. Goals and plans for the water bird censuses will also be discussed.



- Sunday, February 17: Survey and census of water birds.
- Sunday, March 16: Survey and census of water birds.
- Sunday, April 13: Survey and census of water birds.
- Sunday, July 20: Heron census.
- Sunday, August 3: Shore bird census.
- Sunday, November 23: Survey and census of water birds.

All water bird trips will start at 8:30 a.m. and last about five hours. Participants should bring very warm clothing and lunch. A compilation and seminar will follow every field trip. For the water bird trips, the following harbor areas and leaders have been designated:

South Harbor: Meet at Moswetuset Hummock, Squantum. David Brown: 328-3533; Leif Robinson: 237-5270.

Central Harbor: Meet at Castle Island, South Boston. Robert Stymeist: 734-1289.

North Harbor: Meet at Orient Heights MBTA Station, East Boston.  
Denise Braunhardt, home: 331-6375; work: 482-0395; Craig  
Jackson: 864-1917.

Nahant: Meet at MDC parking lot at the north end of Nahant Cause-  
way. Soheil Zende, home: 628-8990; work: 923-0941.

In mid-June, the annual Greater Boston Breeding Bird Census will once more count the harbor water birds. Although this is not a TASL field trip, the results of the survey will be added to our census reports. The 1980 Boston and Quincy Christmas Bird Counts will conclude our harbor surveys for the year.

All TASL trips are open to the public. Experienced field observers will lead the census parties, so if you are unfamiliar with Boston Harbor, or inexperienced in identifying sea birds, herons, or shore birds, these trips provide a special opportunity to learn more about the harbor and its birds. By taking part in only one of these field trips or the orientation meeting, you will lend valuable service to the project and become more familiar with Boston Harbor. Regular participation in the surveys and censuses should greatly enhance your appreciation and understanding of the richness of the Boston Harbor environment and its diverse bird life.

A nominal fee, \$1.00 per participant, will be collected for each meeting or field trip to defray photocopying, mailing, and refreshment costs.

For further information, please contact one of the following TASL coordinators:

Denise Braunhardt, 1155 Main Street, South Weymouth, MA 02190;  
331-6375.

Craig Jackson, 531 Putnam Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02138; 864-1917.

Soheil Zende, 380 Broadway, Somerville, MA 02145; 628-8990



**ERIKSON**  
**GRAIN** MILL  
INC.

FULL LINE PURINA DEALER

MAIN STREET at the Bridge, ACTON 263-4733

**A FULL LINE**  
**OF**  
**BIRD SEED**  
**AND**  
**FEEDERS**



Guide to the National Wildlife Refuges, Laura and William Riley. Anchor/Doubleday, 1979, 654 pages, \$14.95.

One of the nice things about being an editor of an international science magazine is that you get to travel a lot. Whenever I go on assignment, I check whether there is a good birding spot in the vicinity; if there is, I allow a day or two free in my itinerary. Then, to get the most out of a brief visit, I write ahead to the compiler(s) of nearby Christmas Counts and ask for information and the name of a possible guide. (Though I never offer to pay for such service, except all expenses while we're on the road, I've always found someone who "just happened to have the day off.")

But with the publication of Laura and William Riley's Guide to the National Wildlife Refuges my quest for information--and birds--will be much easier. In short, it contains descriptions of, directions to, and highlights about 380 national anchors to our natural heritage. In addition, there is solid information about weather, accommodations, and nearby points of interest.

Clearly, this is not a book for bird-watchers alone; it is for everyone who enjoys the outdoors. You can get tips regarding photography blinds, hiking trails, what fish you might catch, and hunting restrictions. (I cannot help but wonder whether Roger Tory Peterson was yanking someone's chain in his quote on the jacket blurb: "This book will surely be in every bird watcher's backpack ... " You carry it, RTP; it weighs over two pounds! In addition to providing information about what you might find at national wildlife refuges, this fat volume can also conjure up memories of the good times. Ah, yes, the White-winged Black Tern (Chincoteague, Virginia), scores of Clapper Rails and Gull-billed Terns (Brigantine, New Jersey), Mangrove Cuckoo (J. N. Darling, Florida), 39 Whooping Cranes (Aransas, Texas--where else?), Ross' Goose (Sacramento, California), Hawaiian Stilt (Kealia Pond), LeConte's Sparrow (Big Stone, Minnesota), Yellow-bellied Flycatchers (Rachel Carson, Maine). Oops! No entry--the authors missed that last one!

Wrong! By checking the index, you will find Rachel Carson N.W.R. listed under Parker River, which provides administration. Thus, you should use this book carefully to avoid overlooking some small or undeveloped refuge near you but perhaps hundreds of miles from its administrative headquarters.

For Massachusetts the table of contents lists Great Meadows, Monomoy, and Parker River. The authors truthfully write: "Great Meadows may be unique among national wildlife refuges in its urban location, just fifteen miles from the center of Boston." They also note that the golden lotus growth there is the most prolific in Massachusetts. There follows a good mammal list, a rather perfunctory bird list, a roster of nearby historical sites, and some natural history, "loosestrife was first introduced in the United States in a backyard Concord garden." (Incidentally, the writing is excellent; what could have been a dry directory reads in many places like a novel.)

If you travel, buy a copy of Guide to the National Wildlife Refuges. If you don't, borrow a copy from your library; it may change your lifestyle.

Leif J. Robinson

## SURVIVING AS AN INNER CITY BIRDER IN BOSTON

by J. M. Grugan, Boston

Most birders, understandably, would be hesitant to limit their peregrinations to a city. "Getting out" usually refers to an early morning start for the hinterlands of avian abundance. In Massachusetts this usually means a trip to Cape Cod, Cape Ann, or Newburyport. But if time is of the essence, at the most an hour or two is available, where does the inner city Boston Birder pursue his quest? Answering this question can be as much a part of adjusting to city life in Boston as becoming familiar with Storrow Drive, the Red Sox, or "coffee regular."

The Boston Common and Public Garden would perhaps be more relevant for a social tête-à-tête, but they nevertheless can provide decent early morning birding. While some might be surprised to hear that one can walk through the Common at night, or even in the early morning, I can honestly say that the greatest disturbance that I have experienced was the chanting of Hari Krishna followers. (To overcome fear of the Common I suggest a quick three minutes in Thompkins Park in New York City---at noon!)

The biggest disappointment of the Common for me was the total lack of strigidine visitors during my two-year tenure on Beacon Street. I had hoped for a Screech Owl or a Barred Owl in one of those big trees near the Rotunda, or around the Garden pond, and so on many nights I offered an owl imitation. The only response I ever got was a strange high-pitched whistle, that had me completely baffled until I remembered that our ever-present mascot, Rattus norvegicus, can climb trees.

One of the more amazing aspects of man-bird relations has always seemed to be the lack of interaction. I have never been able to understand how anyone can be oblivious to the yak of the flicker or the cacophony of the Mockingbird. It is dismaying to think that anyone could ignore the glorious song of a May Tennessee Warbler, given from a Garden dogwood. Among my favorite birds of the Common was a male Ruby-throated Hummingbird that boldly buzzed its rapid way through the hustle and bustle of morning city workers to taste the nectar of the potted flowers in front of a nearby sandwich shop. Though people were passing within feet of the bird, it went as unnoticed as a fly. And that Woodcock crouching on the bare dirt of the Common surely looked comically misplaced.

Although many city birders may not have a backyard from which to observe avian sights, some have rooftops from which to watch firsthand one of the most splendid events of the biological world, nocturnal migration. If you find yourself in even a moderately tall highrise, don't hesitate to make a midnight visit during spring or fall to the rooftop. My former building on Beacon Street was 11 stories high, and when the winds were right, the sounds of the passerines moving by night were sometimes incredible. Roof-nesting nighthawks, flashing through the "canyons" of Boston, provide a constant acoustical accompaniment by night, while the diurnal twittering of Chimney Swifts is a sure sign of spring in Boston.

Although the Common is good for a quick trip in spring or fall, it is

less so in winter, the time of the hardy, the time of the non-passerine. The Red Line subway passes over the Charles River, and on the way to Harvard Square one sees the Museum of Science to the east. Almost always there are Herring and Great Black-backed Gulls here, but my first inner city Bonaparte's Gull, seen from the train, was cause for further investigation.

On the northern side of the Charles, behind the Museum of Science, there is a warm water effluent in winter. Nine species of gulls have turned up here, including Glaucous, Iceland, and Black-headed Gull. Bufflehead, Barrow's Goldeneye and a pair of Hooded Mergansers have appeared both winters that I have observed, and I suspect that some of the same individual birds are returning year after year to this ice-free spot.

My most recent haunt has been Boston Harbor. The inner harbor, which is easily accessible from points along Commercial Street in the North End of Boston, is a great place to study the different plumages and the feeding behavior of some of the more common larids, including the Laughing Gull. The late summer of 1978 brought thousands of gulls to the inner harbor to feed on the dead menhaden that had been decapitated by the bluefish. Night herons roost on the abandoned piers that dot the innermost areas of the harbor, and other herons can occasionally be seen flying toward East Boston. My best sighting here occurred in the fall of 1978, when a possible Franklin's Gull was seen.

I would be remiss not to mention the Boston Harbor islands. From Long Wharf in Boston one can reach George's Island by taking a harbor cruise with one of the several companies that run such trips, usually from May to October. While George's Island ordinarily has little to offer in the way of birds, there is a free water-taxi that will drop you off on any of several harbor islands. At least one of these, Lovell's Island, is heartily recommended for fall birding. Camping is possible (the necessary permit can be obtained from the MDC office in Boston), and the experience can be quite worthwhile in many ways. You find yourself with only the distant skyscrapers of the city on the westward horizon. To the east there is nothing but ocean. Lovell's Island is unusually well-vegetated for an island of its size, and thus the attraction for birds. My only trip in the spring was uninspiring, but I have made two trips in the fall that constitute some of the most enjoyable birding I have done in Massachusetts.

So inner city birding is possible, at least as a last resort, when Newburyport, Cape Ann, and Cape Cod are out of reach. The warblers of the Public Garden, and the ducks and gulls of Boston Harbor-Charles River can provide many hours of entertainment, as can a trip to Boston's harbor islands. Seasonal populations compose the bulk of the species present, and a good spot for transients, e.g., the Common, can be quite dreary in dead of winter. But all in all I recommend it, especially to those with a sense of adventure and a need to be part of the changing outdoors while shouldering city life.

The following is a compilation of some of the more interesting birds that I have observed in the areas mentioned, together with dates of occurrence:

Boston Common and Public Garden  
(44 species recorded)

American Woodcock	4/14/78
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	10/5/77
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	10/20/77, 4/14/78, 5/14/78
Olive-sided Flycatcher	10/25/77
Hermit Thrush	10/25/77
Swainson's Thrush	10/20/77, 5/14/78
Veery	10/25/77
Red-eyed Vireo	10/5/77
Black-and-white Warbler	10/20/77, 5/14/78
Northern Parula	5/10/77, 5/14/78
Nashville Warbler	10/25/77
Cape May Warbler	5/10/77
Bay-breasted Warbler	10/25/77
Blackpoll Warbler	9/18/77
Tennessee Warbler	5/14/78
Pine Grosbeak	11/20/77

Charles River Basin

Gadwell	2/20/77
Barrow's Goldeneye	2/20/77, 2/8/78
Bufflehead	2/20/77, 2/9/78
Common Merganser	3/5/77
Hooded Merganser	3/5/77, 2/8/78
Glaucous Gull	2/20/77
Iceland Gull	2/20/77, 3/8/78
Black-headed Gull	3/8/78

Lovell's Island  
(102 recorded species)

Merlin	9/10/78
Black-billed Cuckoo	9/9/78, 6/8/79
Whip-poor-will	9/21/79
Yellow-throated Vireo	9/20/79
Philadelphia Vireo	9/9/78
Orange-crowned Warbler	9/9/78
Connecticut Warbler	9/21/79
Yellow-breasted Chat	9/10/78
Rose-breasted Grosbeak	9/21/79
Clay-colored Sparrow	9/20/79
Lincoln's Sparrow	9/10/78

## BIRDERS' CONDUCT: A PROBLEM AT PLUM ISLAND

Bird Observer received the following letter, dated November 29, 1979, from George W. Gavutis, Refuge Manager of the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge:

Dear... (Birders):

During recent months, we have noted a significant increase in violations of refuge regulations by birders. While we see birding as one of our most desirable public uses, we also recognize that violations by this group generally result in more significant and direct conflict with our primary responsibility of preserving wildlife and its habitat. While we more or less routinely write tickets for illegal parking and speeding (primarily by beach users and casual sightseers), we have often been more lenient and issued verbal warnings to birders for trespassing into closed areas and destroying vegetation by driving onto the newly-seeded road shoulders. The continuing abnormally mild weather on this past Thanksgiving weekend resulted in very heavy use and abuse of the refuge (more abuse than we noted from beach users all summer and fall in fact), despite the presence of a gateperson and two officers. Birders (many of them not local) outnumbered all other users much of the time and significantly contributed to our problems.

As a courtesy to your group and for whatever assistance you might provide in passing the word, I wish to advise that, effective immediately, I have instructed our law enforcement personnel to begin issuing citations for the aforementioned violations.

Particularly troublesome problems are:

1) Ignoring fences, "closed area" signs, and the "closed to foot travel" sign in the Stage Island field. This has resulted in reduced migratory waterfowl use of the field, pool, and ponds, and has served to drive wildlife into hunters on the State land south of the field and Stage Island Pool. When confronted, practically everyone says they didn't think or realize they were doing any harm.

2) Illegal parking on the newly-seeded road shoulders between Lot 7 and the State Park and elsewhere.

3) Illegal parking on the newly-seeded road shoulders adjacent to the "New Pines." This is an area covered by special birding permits and all parking should be on the road service during periods of low public use -- not on busy warm weekends. No parking lot is provided at this spot because of our shared concerns that greatly increased use and abuse of this area would result. Parking could be restricted to the Subheadquarters lot (¼ mile north) and eventually the new parking lot planned for the new headquarters. The present subheadquarters lot is very small and often filled with clammers. Many badly compacted and deeply eroded trails are developing in the Pines and yet we fear that installation of boardwalk might lead to even greater use and parking problems.

We would welcome any constructive comments or suggestions your group might have concerning these or any other subjects affecting the welfare of the refuge and its continued use by the public.

Permit for Birding:

1. On North and South Pool dikes within  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile north and south of Cross Dike Tower as marked by signs. (July 15 - September 30)
2. For parking and birding within 100 yards of Subheadquarters building year-round.
3. Parallel parking on refuge road (not vegetated shoulders) adjacent to North Pool field for birding in The Pines - from Labor Day to Memorial Day during periods of low public use and when not constituting a traffic hazard.
4. Parking in Nelson's Island lot and walking for birding onto Nelson's Island. (July 15 - Sep. 30)

OUR CONTRIBUTORS

JAMES W. BERRY, a resident of Ipswich since 1972, is a personnel management advisor with the Boston regional office of the U.S. Office of Personnel Management. His column "Wildlife" appears in the weekly Ipswich Today.

DENISE BRAUNHARDT is a wildlife biologist serving as a 4-H agent for the Suffolk County Extension Service.

WILLIAM E. DAVIS, JR., who resides in Foxborough, is an Associate Professor of Science in the College of Basic Studies at Boston University. A research associate of Manomet Bird Observatory, he has worked on the Clark's Island heron project and is currently studying bird vocalizations. His own illustrations accompany the article.

JACK M. GRUGAN majored in wildlife biology at the University of Colorado, Boulder. A resident of Boston, he is pursuing a career in law.

HAROLD F. MAYFIELD epitomizes the amateur ornithologist. His work established the affinity of Kirtland's Warbler for jack-pine country in lower Michigan and led to preservation of this limited habitat. Through continuing census efforts, Mayfield has documented the fortunes of this rare species, which is one of very few in North America whose total population can be said to be exactly known.

ALISON WEBBER resides in Weston and is employed by a graphics firm in Boston. Bird Observer is pleased to be the first publication to present her work.



INDEX VOLUME 7 1979

Alcid Identification in Massachusetts	Richard R.Veit	178
The Amateur in Ornithology	Harold F.Mayfield	215
Birders' Conduct: A Problem at Plum Island		232
Bluebirds Need Your Help	William Allan	10
The Broad-winged Hawk Flight of September 13, 1978		
A Census of Heron and Ibis Nests at Clark's Island, Plymouth, Massachusetts, 1978	Paul M.Roberts	137
Changing Habitats for Nesting Birds	W.E.Davis, L.Smith,	
Field Identification Notes: The Two Waterthrushes	B.A.Harrington	118
Field Summaries:	Neil Clark	120
The Fall Migration: August-October 1978		61
The Winter Season: November, 1978-February, 1979	Joseph T. Leverich	
The Spring Migration: 1979		23
The Breeding Bird Season: 1979		67
Ground Nesting and Related Behavior of Nighthawks ( <i>Chordeiles minor</i> ) in Massachusetts		145
Guide to the National Wildlife Refuges (A Book Review)	A.Hiam, M.Sutherland	190
Identification of Arctic Loons		
Kestrel Nesting Boxes	Leif J.Robinson	228
Long-Term Bird Population Studies-- A Rewarding Experience	Joseph T.Leverich	186
MacGillivray's Warbler in Lexington, Massachusetts	Paul M.Roberts	12
Mourning Doves in Massachusetts		
Re-establishment of the Common Puffin ( <i>Fratercula minor</i> ) in a Former Breeding Area in Muscongus Bay, Maine	William E.Davis, Jr.	219
Results of the 1978 Christmas Bird Counts in Eastern Massachusetts	Robert H.Stymeist	18
Some Highlights of Contemporary Raptor Research	Michael J.Brazauskas	106
Surviving as an Inner City Birder in Boston		
Take a Second Look	S.D.J.Franzeen	182
Take a Second Look, Again		
Take a Second Look: The Year of Boston Harbor	R.H.Stymeist	109
Townsend's Warbler in Massachusetts	Leif J.Robinson,	
Where to Find Birds:	Paul M.Roberts	133
Birding Orleans and Eastham	J.M.Grugan	229
Finding Birds in Ipswich		8
Four Seasons at Plum Island (Part II Summer-Fall)		119
Guide to Birding Martha's Vineyard	Craig Jackson	226
Introduction to Birding Ipswich River Wildlife Sanctuary		
Mount Tom State Reservation	Robert Prescott	173
	James W. Berry	209
	H.D'Entremont & S.Zendeh	93
	Richard M.Sargent	53
	James S.MacDougall	5
	David L.Fischer	129



# AGWAY

## Bird Feeding Specialists



### Birdsnack Wild Bird Food

(77-5103, 10)

**\$4.45** 20 lbs

**\$9.65** 50 lbs



### Feathered Friend Sunflower Seed

(77-5025, 27)

**\$6.29** 20 lbs

**\$11.99** 50 lbs

Also available:

**Cracked Corn**

**\$9.35** 100 lbs

*Prices subject to change without notice*

**AGWAY, INC.  
EMERSON ROAD  
WALTHAM, MASS.  
894-4880**

BIRD OBSERVER (USPS 369-850)  
462 TRAPELO ROAD  
BELMONT, MA. 02178

SECOND CLASS  
MAIL PERMIT  
No. 369850  
BOSTON, MA 02109

Barbara Howell  
12 Orchard Lane  
Wayland, MA 01981

---

We have a complete line of  
outdoor winter clothing from



... a name famous for 150 years for quality  
and style in 100% woolen clothing.

north country outfitters

Now, in our new, larger, location at 32 Main Street  
Concord, Mass.